

Amendment to the Claims:

A listing of the claims is provided below and will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A strengthening apparatus to strengthen the torso and abdominal region, comprising:
 - a frame having an interior portion;
 - flexible supporting members, wherein the flexible supporting members are coupled to the frame and positioned to rest on the shoulders of a user, wherein the user is positioned within the interior portion of the frame during use; and
 - cross segments coupled to the frame;
wherein the frame comprises an arc member and a linear member, wherein the linear member couples to the arc member to form a semi-oval shape;
wherein the cross segments comprise a fitting member configured to receive a weight;
~~wherein the frame is substantially oval in shape and is open on one side, the side opposite the open side defining a closed portion, and~~
wherein the flexible supporting members comprise a first end and a second end, wherein the first end is coupled to the ~~open side of the frame~~ arc member and the second end is coupled to the ~~closed portion of the oval~~ linear member.
2. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the supporting members are adjustable.
3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cross segments are releasably coupled to the frame.
4. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising cross segments coupled to the frame.
- 5-7 (Canceled)
8. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fitting member is releasably coupled to the cross segment.
9. (Canceled)
10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the supporting members are contoured to create a spacing for a user's neck.

12 (Canceled)

13. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the frame further comprises a hinge mechanism such that the frame can be folded.

14. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the arc member further comprises a hinge member, and the linear member further comprises a hinge member, wherein the hinge member of the arc member and the hinge member of the linear member are aligned such that the frame can be folded.

15-23. (Canceled)

24 (New) That strengthening apparatus of claim 1 wherein the arc member has an opening therein, said opening centrally located between the position where the linear member couples to the arc member.